

Lucid Cafe - Kevin Hancock

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I think you're valuable, powerful, meaningful, interesting, fun. All of that. You know, the community needs economic resources, but it needs non-economic resources too, it needs that connectivity and respect and empowerment and love. And that's the part that really has been meaningful for me. (17:04-17:34)

Freeing people to speak with their own voice, that makes management and leadership exponentially easier. I cannot tell you how much easier leadership has gotten here once we chose to share it and disperse it and simply meet people where they are. I wrap that up with this simple thought because for me that summarizes it. It's that idea that nothing has to change in you for you to be amazing. (29:40-30:15)

Wendy: This is Wendy Halley and you're listening to Lucid Cafe. Aloha. Thanks for tuning in. I want to get right to today's guest. I think his message is the perfect medicine as we enter a brand spanking new year after a handful of not so fun years.

As you know, life presents each one of us with a variety of challenges and my guest, Kevin Hancock, is a sterling example of how walking directly into a challenge can bring unexpected and extraordinary gifts and growth.

Kevin is an award-winning author and speaker. As the CEO of [Hancock Lumber](#). Kevin struggled to guide the two-century old lumber company through the 2007 collapse of the housing market, only to lose some of his voice to the rare neurological speech disorder, [spasmodic dysphonia](#). This experience sent him journeying more than 20 times to the [Pine Ridge Indian Reservation](#) in South Dakota in search of voice recovery, through self-reflection and immersion in nature.

While at Pine Ridge, he met an entire community that felt a piece of their authentic voice had been taken or stolen from them, helping him to realize there are lots of ways to lose one's voice in this world. From this experience, Kevin came to see life as a quest for self-actualization. His first book, [Not for Sale: Finding Center in the Land of Crazy Horse](#), won three national book awards. In 2020, his book, [The Seventh Power: One CEO's Journey into the Business of Shared Leadership](#) was published. And his most recent book, and the subject of today's conversation, is called [48 Whispers: from Pine Ridge and the Northern Plains](#), and is a hybrid of sorts, part photography and part thoughts for reflection, heightened self-awareness, and human advancement. I really enjoyed talking with Kevin. I hope you enjoy it, too.

Thank you, Kevin, for coming on the show.

Kevin: Yes, super happy to be with you Wendy, thanks for having me.

02:39 **Wendy:** Absolutely. So I'm curious about you and your story. I imagine you've had to tell your story quite a bit, but I'm hoping you wouldn't mind revisiting it with me today.

Kevin: Yeah, I'd love to.

Wendy: You have, it sounds like, a special relationship with the folks out at Pine Ridge, on the Pine Ridge reservation. Yeah?

Kevin: Yes. I do.

Wendy: I would love to find out how that came to be.

Kevin: Yeah. I never saw it coming, that's for sure. So I've got to back up a little bit. I am the CEO of a lumber company here in Maine, Hancock Lumber, and it's a family business that goes back to the 1840s. It's one of the oldest companies in America, and I'm part of the six generations of my family to work there.

And in 2007 roughly, the national housing and mortgage markets collapsed, and that put a ton of pressure on companies in our industry. And I ended up internalizing a lot of that pressure as the CEO of the company. And that manifested in 2010 when I acquired a rare voice disorder, a speaking disorder called 'spasmodic dysphonia', that I'd never heard of, that affects only speech. It has no known cause and no known cure. We can go down this road in a moment if you like, but I quite quickly had to figure out how I was going to lead without being able to really talk very much. So it was a big paradigm change in terms of how I thought about leadership.

Anyway, to Pine Ridge. In 2012, the economy stabilized, and I could see that our company was going to be fine and go forward and do well at all of that. But I had this growing feeling that coming from the rugged individualism of Maine, I tried to fight this growing feeling that I needed to serve myself a little bit more. I needed to take some time, catch my breath, and search for my voice on a literal and spiritual level. I didn't know how I was going to do that, but I've always had a love affair with the American west. And in August of 2012, I picked up a copy of [National Geographic](#) magazine, and the Pine Ridge Indian reservation was the cover story. And I read that article and was swept up in a way I've never was captured by reading anything before. And at that moment said to my wife, Allison, I'm going to go there. I want to see what life is like for the people who live there.

And that prompted a one-off trip in the fall of that year, almost a decade ago. And then one trip became two, two became three. And now I've been there over two dozen times. The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is in the Southwest corner of South Dakota. Very remote, very big, historic. Poor financially, rich culturally. And land without trees. The total opposite of where I am in Maine. The connection to all of that, and then I'll pause, is Pine Ridge, I countered in an entire community that didn't feel fully heard. That felt as if a piece of their authentic voice had been taken or stolen from them. And so in the most unexpected of ways, I really could oddly relate or felt a connection to their struggle. And I've since become a champion,, or tried to be of people or communities that don't feel they have a voice. So that's 10 years of my life in four minutes, but that's the story.

Wendy: That's quite a story. So it started as a healing journey. You wanted to go and you said, find your voice.

Kevin: Correct. For me, that came to have two meanings. One, the literal healing of my voice disorder. But second, this belief that the root cause of the disorder, or the ultimate healing of the

physical disorder, was spiritual in nature. I felt like I had really lost my sense of self in my corporate leadership role for our company, and I really needed to reconnect with the essence of who I was separate from all my roles, really find my own inner voice again.

It turned out, even though I didn't intend it this way, but once I really began to learn a lot more about the spirituality and customs of the Sioux people. It was a bit of a modern-day vision quest I was on. If you looked at the Sioux vision quest, which was a critical component of their culture - was and is - my journey was checking almost all the boxes of what a vision quest was meant to be about. So it was a bit of a modern-day quest into a very different land, a very different culture, and something I was doing completely by myself. It was really a turn of reconnecting with the essence of who I was.

09:12 **Wendy:** So when you had the idea to go to the reservation, what did you imagine might happen? What was the motivation for going there around this kind of vision quest experience that you were about to have?

Kevin: Yeah, great question. At first, I was scared of what people would think about why I was going there. And there are on both ends, my end and their end, there's lots of valid stereotypes about white men from away going to places like Pine Ridge, and having the purpose or the outcome or both being dubious. And then here I am as the CEO back in Maine of a company, I'm in the prime of my career. How do you explain to people how you're just leaving two or three times a year to go off to this remote Indian reservation?

So at first I lied, I made up an incorrect story, really. In hindsight, I felt I needed a cause other than my own. So I said, well, I'll go there and see if we can help with their housing needs. Now, to be clear, I was interested in that, and we have done a lot to help with that, but that wasn't really the core thing that was bringing me. It was a personal spiritual quest, and over time I started coming clean with that. I tell people now I can go there, it's a place where I feel like I get more than I give. The people there and their culture have a lot to offer the rest of humanity, the planet earth, and modern society, and really become comfortable talking about that. That their community is often thought of as a past based community. But what I really came to see is they, in my view, are carrying wisdom through, in large part, their intimate connectivity to nature, carrying wisdom that is desperately needed by humanity in the 21st century.

Wendy: Beautiful. All right. I'm curious about how you tiptoed in the beginning around that. So you go out there with this mission to help them with maybe some housing, which I'm sure they probably very much needed. I'm trying to imagine how the shift went from housing to your true wish, which was to find your voice.

Kevin: It was subtle, and it took place slowly over time. And one thing I love about their culture. I have a friend from there, for example, by the name of Catherine Great Day, who's actually Dakota from [Standing Rock Reservation](#), but she was living at Pine Ridge during the early years I went there. And said to me one day after we had only known each other for a few years, she said, "I love you and the people here love you, because I could see you have a good heart." And they, that community, tends to look not at what you're carrying in your head, but what you're carrying in your heart, your intentions. And once I simply spent enough time there and people got to know each other, the relationships blossomed the same way they do with all humans. It just took time in both directions to break down some of those preconceived barriers about who I was and who they were. And I thought a lot about this, too, Wendy. Because you can say, well, they're tribe is Killua, the specific community, which is part of the Lakota land of the Sioux nations of Indians, which is part of the North American Native community, which is part of the global indigenous community, which is part of the human community.

So here's my point. If you back your view of humanity far enough, we're all related. It's all the same tribe. Or if you narrow your view in enough, we're all different. And you can see whichever you want to see.

Wendy: Yes. Absolutely. Beautifully put. And we certainly are struggling with that, aren't we?

Kevin: We are. And this really came to inspire me about my time in Pine Ridge. Because here was this white, male, middle aged, CEO from the east coast, authentically becoming friends with dozens of people in this remote, disenfranchised, impoverished community. And today people, I used to struggle with this question too, people would ask me, well, what do you do when you go there? And I now just tell the truth with that answer, too. I don't do anything when I go there, I just hang out with the people who live there. And that's I think what really tipped this, that I wasn't trying to change or fix them or anything there. I thought they were amazing, are amazing, as a community exactly as they are. And they're there. It's possible to say there's no agenda, but I am living as close to being agenda-less when I'm there as I ever lived. And I think the absence of an agenda is what opened up the opportunity for connectivity.

And I've since come to say that I really believe, as a result of that experience, that awareness and connectivity in and of itself is a powerful act. I see you. I know you're here. I think you're important. I think you're valuable, powerful, meaningful, interesting, fun. All of that. You know, the community needs economic resources, but it needs non-economic resources too. It needs that connectivity, and respect, and empowerment, and love. And that's the part that really has been meaningful for me.

17:11 **Wendy:** Absolutely. I'm imagining, because native people have an inherent and justified lack of trust, that it probably took some time for them to see that you didn't have that agenda. Because I think there's a romanticism that non-native people have around native culture, and that can automatically set up an agenda if you're going into Indian territory. At that time, was your voice completely gone, or was it very difficult to communicate more than it is now?

Kevin: Great question. So when I would go to Pine Ridge, my voice would get better. Not perfect, by any stretch, you could still totally tell he's got a funky, unusual voice, but it would get better. What I learned with my disorder, which is neurobiological, is the calmer I can make my inner core, the better my voice does. So it's actually a blessing, because I've got this built-in thermometer that tells me on the outside how I'm doing on the inside.

So Pine Ridge was a place that was generative for me, it was giving me strength and healing somehow. And I couldn't articulate it, but I could feel it. And I just kept going back. Second, the separate question about culture and the proprietary nature of a tribe's culture and cultural appropriation and being respectful, they're right to describe and define their culture. So I'm super clear about this in my writing, in my books, and my talks. I'm only ever describing their culture as I experienced it. And I'm carrying my own energy and background into that experience. But what really fascinated me and what I've concluded personally, is that the wisdom they've got that intrigued me is actually available to all humans. To acquire it you needed to have lived intimately, for a long period of time, with nature. Their wisdom is in having dialed into the rhythm with which nature flows.

Now, how did they acquire that wisdom? It's because that's how they lived. And any group of humans that lived intimately with nature, I think, would have access to the same understandings that might get articulated in different ways. But they're the same basic understandings, but most of us have abandoned that lifestyle and lost the connection. So I don't believe personally they're carrying wisdom that's meant only for the Sioux. It's wisdom from nature meant for humanity that they uniquely are the masters of the most knowledgeable gatekeepers of because of the tradition of how they lived so intimately with nature.

21:25 **Wendy:** Have you ever heard of the concept of indigenous mind versus colonial mind?

Kevin: I've not heard that phrase before. But I'd love to hear what that means to you.

Wendy: It's a cultural worldview. Colonial mind, I mean, you can imagine what that might be, right? It's the mindset or the cultural worldview of domination of taking over and making something the way you want it to be. And indigenous mind, and this is my understanding of these concepts -let me put that caveat out there - indigenous mind is about relationships, which is what you're talking about. It's about being in relationship with the natural world. Your community, the people around you, yourself. And if you have a spiritual practice with your invisible friends in the dream time. So being in relationship with everything around you. And I wonder if, because Western culture is so deeply embedded in colonial mind, that we've lost that relationship with the natural world. I'm suspecting that's contributing to this romanticism around the native perspective, in any culture, any native indigenous people that it's more like a longing for that connection that we're maybe trying - through native people - trying to reconnect. When you're right, we could find it on our own at any time.

Kevin: Right. And they are a reminder of an alternative perspective on the world, at life, at self, and relationship. That really attracted me to want to keep going deeper and learning more. Every time I would go to Pine Ridge, and still to this day, and by leaving the reservation and spending several days alone in the wilderness, on the Northern Plains, in the Black Hills, somewhere around that. So I was really acquiring strength in two places. First with them in their community and the second on my own sequestered in nature. And changes started simply, I got home after the first trip to see my wife, Allison, "You know, you might laugh at me, but I actually feel I can hear better. I can see better." And I've really come to know it's true.

Wendy: It kind of makes sense.

Kevin: Yes. Yes. So then what I really got into it was, can we start to bring some of this kind of energy back into the place of work, in my place, a very unexpected place, a lumber company in Maine. Could we start dishing out more love, more understanding of our shared common humanity that binds us all. Could we give people at work a bigger voice? Could we help them come into their own voice? Could the loss, the partial loss of the CEO's voice actually be the invitation and a gift and a blessing to lead differently in a way that strengthens the voices of others.

So I've now spent a decade trying to help facilitate that type of culture in our company across 600 employees at 16 sites in Maine and New Hampshire. And then I run back out west for a personal renewal, for more learning and more growth, and trying to bring it back and keep sustaining it here. And that whole journey in both ends, the Maine end within the lumber company, at the Northern Plains end, have both been such a blessing. So out of this technically disability, that was my voice condition, came this great big life-changing gift.

Wendy: I can't even imagine what it must be like to work at your lumber company. And I'm a long time, do you guys have an employee assistance program?

Kevin: Yes.

Wendy: Yeah, I'm a long time EAP clinician.

Kevin: Oh, super cool.

26:56 **Wendy:** Besides having this wellness center here in Vermont. So workplace wellness is one of my jams and to hear about what you're doing, can you talk a little bit about what you've actually incorporated into the culture in your workplace that has worked?

Kevin: Sure. The big tipping point is we changed the mission of the entire company. I'm going to oversimplify this, but for centuries, employees existed to serve companies. What we're after is to flip that, the company exists to serve the people who work there. Not because they'll produce better results, that will happen, the performance company will actually improve. But we're interested in the people who work here because they're human beings and they've got amazing value way beyond what they could contribute to their employer.

And I really think in the 21st century that corporations have to advance humanity. That's the mission. Now how do you do that? You have to do it one human at a time. So where are you going to do it? You have to do it where humans hang out. And where adult humans hang out? They hang out at work. So many people spend a chunk of their life working.

So we talked today about being an employee-centric company, where the first priority - we have multiple priorities - but the first is the experience of the people who work here. And the goal is simply to help them self-actualize at work, come into their own voice and feel safe and valued and sacred and heard. And people say, well, how do you do that? Isn't that hard? And having spent a decade on it is what I say. No, it's not hard. Creating a culture where people feel intimidated and forced to be quiet and forced not to be themselves. That's hard. That takes constant work. You've got to set up all kinds of management systems, that's hard. Freeing people to speak with their own voice, that makes management and leadership exponentially easier.

I cannot tell you how much easier leadership has gotten here once we chose to share it and disperse it and simply meet people where they are. I wrap that up with this simple thought, because for me that summarizes it. It's that idea that nothing has to change in you for you to be amazing. You don't have to pick up so many widgets or sell so many things. We'll try to do that stuff together, but from a whole different platform of engagement, if we never make another widget, you're amazing. It's such a simpler platform to engage people that way.

Wendy: Yes, it is. I think we need to clone you, Kevin. Because you know how a workplace culture starts with leadership, right? The leader is setting the tone for that culture. It sounds like you're doing a really splendid job of creating a culture that's relational. It's about connecting with one another. And then the by-product is probably, people are content, and they feel respected, and there's probably more kindness and therefore they're highly productive.

Kevin: Yes. Right. We've been now eight years in a row as the best place to work in Maine, and our engagement score - we survey engagement every year through third party - confidential, safe for our employees, but it's about 90%. So 9 out of 10 people who work in our company will find their experiences meaningful and engaging. [Gallup Polls](#) will tell us that nationally where the average is about 34%. One out of three, finds their job more than just a paycheck and Gallup goes on to talk about the economic cost of that, but what captures me, and I know you Wendy, is what's the human cost of that. You know, people who work decades in the course of a lifetime, they put a huge part of who they are into work and for that to only be an economic exercise in the 21st century is silly and unnecessary.

This is not the industrial revolution anymore. It doesn't need to be that way, but we've got to change our paradigms in terms of, to me, it gets back to what I said to your first question on that subject, what's the purpose of work. Companies get whatever they prioritize. They pretty much get whatever

they prioritize. So if you're a company does not have a dynamic, inclusive, engaging, uplifting culture, it's only because the leaders of that company aren't making it a top priority. That's the only reason.

Wendy: No, it makes perfect sense. And yeah, I was just thinking how great it would be for each individual, all of us, to create our own personal mission statement. Not just at the workplace, but what do I want my experience to be? Who do I want to be?

Kevin: Yes. Right. Work should enhance that and support that, not discourage it or thwart it. Think about this question, too. It's become my favorite rhetorical question on that subject. What if, just pretend, everybody on earth felt trusted, respected, valued, and heard, what would change? Everything would change. It's the root of all human social problems.

Wendy: Yes, indeed. It would be a much different world, that's for sure.

Kevin: We can be overwhelmed about the impossibility of that, or we all just treat someone that way.

Wendy: What a novel idea.

Kevin: Right. And this happened to me at Pine Ridge, too. First when I saw an eagle there, it overwhelmed me. But then once I settled in and in that simple place of yeah, I probably can't become valuable to everybody here. But I bet I can become meaningful to some people here and same thing in our company. I can't create a work culture ideal at every company on earth, but I can give it the old college try here and you just break it down to something manageable. There's so much tv and internet and phones and info news today that it feels overwhelming.

Wendy: Definitely.

Kevin: But we've got to take everything back to a local human level. And when you take it back to a local human level, it's always actionable.

35:00 **Wendy:** Yeah. I mean, when you put it like that. So before our time winds down, I want to talk to you a little bit about your book, which is called 48 Whispers. It's a photo journal of your time out there. Can you tell me a little bit about the genesis of this book? It also has a lot of little essays that you've written and quotes and stuff like that.

Kevin: Yeah. So I go to the reservation and surrounding plains every year carrying a camera and a journal. And I just could see differently and think differently, think with the heart. And the ideas that came to me were life changing for me when I would go back home. So over a decade I had thousands of pictures and thousands of writings. And people started to see them and were like, you know, you ought to share some of those. So that's all it is, it's really a modern-day travel journal. But really, journaling with purpose into the essence of our shared humanity, and as the Sioux approached it, we built it from within for me to become more valuable to you.

Wendy, for example, we first have to become more whole and valuable to myself. And it's that old Gandhi line of thinking, when I change and when I grow, the world around me is going to benefit. And I also really tried to translate that back to a new approach to business leadership, which is for myself, manager and supervisors, you don't really need to focus much on anybody but yourself. I found that giving myself is pretty much a full-time job. And the thing I can do to influence the company I'm CEO of, is literally to try to be that change that I want to see. And that leadership is actually an inside job. It's not about what others need to do or become, it's about what I need to do or

become. And that was liberating because before, with six hundred people at our company, the old thinking, how are they going to change? How am I going to change them? Well, that's overwhelming and that's not the way it even works. And the new thinking has been so liberating. I just need to keep strengthening myself, making myself become what I want to see. And that could change an entire house, school, neighborhood, company, country, or planet.

Wendy: It sounds like you're not talking out of your ass too, because it sounds like you're actually experiencing those outcomes. It's not just a concept that you're sharing. Right?

Kevin: That's what really motivated me to do the book, to be with you today, is I've invested a decade in our company, and the change has been dramatic. As described by the people who work at the company, and statistically by our performance. So I know this works. And my first job is to keep giving myself. Second job is to help our company be the best it can be. But I want to invest some energy in trying to spread this, too. Because I know there's a path here in what you and I are talking about today.

Wendy: So do you talk to other companies about how to replicate what you've been doing?

Kevin: I do, I try. It's tricky. Right? Because you can't be pushy about it and it's not ever about, look what I did, do what I do. Very few people who have their awakening would have lost their voice and then gone to the Indian reservation. That was just my path. My point is, don't try to do any of that. You just catch your breath. Find some quiet time, start looking inward, follow the voice in your heart.

Wendy: That's what I mean. Yeah. Are you sharing that with other..

Kevin: Yeah. That is the message.

Wendy: No, I don't mean everyone should start going out to Pine Ridge. I'm sure they wouldn't appreciate that.

Kevin: Right, right. No. Yeah.

40:40 **Wendy:** So what I'm curious about is, if you don't mind, I mean, I don't know if this is too personal or not, but do you have a spiritual or a bigger understanding of why this whole voice thing happened to you?

Kevin: Yeah, I do. It was ego. When I was younger, I saw the company as a way for me to prove my worth or value through leading it. I got really absorbed in that kind of traditional view of my work performance as me. And I was also quite the orator, and so I led by talking, and I led by convincing and telling. It wasn't bad, it's what I learned growing up, it's how everybody's led for 200 years. But then I got my voice taken away from me. It's just so ironic to me that's what it took and suddenly, I couldn't do that. And that was when I stumbled on first start listening. And the second understanding that leadership is really about dispersing power not collecting it. It's about giving other people a bigger voice. So I got lucky in a weird way. I had this trigger that forced me to stop and reassess and change. I honestly don't know that I would have enough self-awareness without that push. But I've since learned, therefore, that we've all got to pay close attention to stuff that happens to us.

Wendy: Yes. Indeed.

Kevin: Stuff that looks like it's only just a problem and finding the message, I now talk about it as learning to follow. I used to just lead, now all I try to do is follow the path that's trying to be laid out for me, if you will.

Wendy: Because life's tragedies can sometimes be a great gift.

Kevin: Right. And they come for us all. They come in different forms, since we've all got different blessings and different challenges, but they come for every single human. And ultimately, it's part of the experience on this planet. It's so simple and, well simple, but everybody that lives dies, everybody you know will die. This planet is set up for loss, and we have to help each other navigate that. And we got to try to learn to see the growth and the invitations within the wounds, which is easier said than done. And I talk about this better than I could live it. You might think, wow, he's got this down. I've got to work on everything we're talking about. I have to work on every single day because we're all human.

Wendy: I'll drink to that. Yes.

Kevin: Right. Cheers.

Wendy: Oh, man. So it was quite a journey you've been on, sir.

Kevin: It's a bit cool. I've really come to like the concept of self-actualization. Everything we've talked about Wendy, you think about the unanswerable question, what's the purpose of a human life on earth? From my experience with my voice and the marginalized community at Pine Ridge, I've concluded that maybe that purpose of a human life on earth is to self-actualize. One thing we've all got in common, we've all got a unique, never to be repeated voice of spirit. There will never be another Wendy, another Kevin, another everybody. Our mission in that lifetime is to come to know that voice, that essence, and love ourselves for who we are and live authentically with that voice and leadership should facilitate that, not thwart it. But the truth is for thousands of years, it's mostly thwarted it, it's mostly been about controlling voices.

Wendy: It's colonial mind.

Kevin: It is. And you can see it everywhere today. Whether it's a capitalist country or a communist country, you can see it everywhere. It's embedded in leadership and that's the pattern that if we could break it, the course of humanity would take a major turn for the better.

Wendy: We'll stay tuned. We'll see what happens. What are we going to do collectively? It is a fascinating time to be on planet earth. Isn't it?

Kevin: It is. Think you've got to see the opportunity, but we've got to bring it back to a local level again. That's what I come back to. If you look globally at what someone else has to do to make the planet or humanity better, you pass out from being overwhelmed, but when you bring it back to a local level, you can always advance yourself and the people around you through the concepts we have the joy of chatting about today.

Wendy: Go sit by a tree. Or if you're out west, in the plains, sit on a rock.

Kevin: Right. No, it's about quieting down and getting re-grounded and repurposed in order to then go forward and create change. It's doing less more often in order to do more. And we make this too

hard on ourselves. There is a much easier way to do things than the way we're going about it generally as a society today, doesn't it need to be the head banging frustration drill we make it.

Wendy: No it doesn't. You got to put a memo out, Kevin, to the world. The subject can be 'no need to bang your head against the wall'. And then you can write what you just said. And you can add in, you know, 'go hang out by a tree'.

Kevin: Yeah. Again, I've seen it at our company as our performance has improved and the leadership has dispersed, the work for everybody has gotten way easier. You won't believe this, well you will but some wouldn't. I can't remember at this company last time I saw somebody get frustrated or raise their voice or the, I don't even see that anymore. When you get rid of ego and set that simple goal which is we're going to honor everybody that works here, that solves a lot of problems.

Wendy: Yeah. You do make it sound like it's an easy thing to do. I don't think it's that kind of easy, because I imagine you can bump up against people who might resist, especially in leadership positions. They may not want to give up that level of control or power that they think they have, or they do have, but if you were to present it in the way that you're presenting it, it sounds like it would be stupid not to.

Kevin: Well, that makes me feel good.

Wendy: We don't want to be stupid. Let's not be stupid. It's a tall order but...

Kevin: Right. It's a lot harder than it has to be.

49:46 **Wendy:** Yeah. Well, Kevin, this has been just a wonderful conversation for me. I really appreciate chatting with you and hearing your story. I didn't really know what your story would be like. It's been quite a journey. Like I said before, there's a lot of humility that comes with that sort of ego dismemberment. Right. You sort of break down who you thought you were and then you're rebuilding yourself and you're realizing like, oh, well I guess I'm not that guy. Huh?

Kevin: So well said, yes. I love that the time for me went by like the snap of a finger. So I really appreciate you having me on, and I loved the conversation.

50:38 **Wendy:** I'm going to say it again. We need to find a way to clone Kevin. To me, what really comes across is that he's not just spurring a bunch of platitudes. That he's speaking from a place of experience, which carries a lot of weight in my book. I love that he's suggesting that authentic change starts with yourself. And that begins when we receive an invitation to enroll in the school of hard knocks.

For Kevin, it was the 2007 financial crisis, followed by the loss of his voice a couple of years later. Then the real work begins if you take yourself up on it. Each serving of humble pie that you manage to swallow while getting your degree in heart knocks brings you one step closer to a broader understanding and a new source of strength and resilience. And then like Kevin, you can live your story and inspire others just by being you.

If you'd like to learn more about Kevin and his books, please visit his website, thebusinessofsharedleadership.com. Thank you so much for listening and for supporting the podcast in whatever way you can. By giving it a positive review, letting others know about the show, making a donation, or by checking out the new offerings at the Lucid Path Etsy shop. Until next time.